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skin are dermal ossicles similar to but somewhat smaller than those of the extinct *Mylodons*. The only white person to see the animal alive was the traveler, the late Ramon Lista, who described it as about the same shape and size as the Indian pangolin.

Professor Poteat has recently shown that Leidy's genus *Ouramœba* is really *Amœba* plus mycelial hyphæ.

BOTANY.

California Plants in their Homes.¹ — This little book of Mrs. Davidson has more successfully brought together the choicest spirit of the ecology and physiology of plants than any other which has come the way of the writer of this notice. Being made for children, it has from this very fact all the more to teach the adult devotee of the science. In some sixteen chapters we are introduced to many kinds of plants and come away with more than a bowing acquaintance. We are introduced to many of the innermost mysteries of their lives and learn their innocent and contriving ways of obtaining for themselves the coveted advantages over their neighbors. While the book is written so that it may be used as a reader, the "supplement for the use of teachers," together with the style of the writing, make it one of the most possible of laboratory books for the younger student; in fact, the temptation to follow out the suggestions of the author to do this and to do that is so fascinating and so easy that it needs only the chance, supplied by the teacher, to be done. The book is, unfortunately, Californian only, but the lesson to teachers is as wide as the subject taught. Our text-books run now to physiology and ecology, but simply as classifications of physiological and ecological facts, from the consideration of which the poor student comes away knowing well that certain things are so, but with little notion of the reason why the teacher has been to such extraordinary pains to make him aware of it. But Mrs. Davidson is a teacher, — a teacher of teachers in fact, — and has realized the folly of thinking that we really get away from the evils of the old systematic teaching in botany by changing simply the subject-matter without changing the method and point of view.

While confessedly an elementary book, this is to be compared

¹ Davidson, Alice Merritt. *A Botanical Reader for Children*. Los Angeles, B. R. Baumgardt & Co.

with many of the books which have been issued for students of a higher grade than those technically for children. The facts brought forward are those usually taught only in books for the higher grades, but they are presented in such a way as to be equally intelligible to "children," with the farther advantage that the significance of the detail is never lost sight of — an advantage inestimable in its results. In the headings to the chapters, too, the author has displayed great ingenuity, and the results are not open to such criticism as may be directed toward those of some popular books and articles on botanical subjects.

The most unsatisfactory features of the book are the illustrations. They are too coarse to convey the idea desired in most cases, and the grace and delicacy of most of the plants figured have been lost entirely.

We feel that the teacher in California who attempts to realize from "nature study" in the lower grades that which is hoped for from it, will find a way pointed out by this book which is both clear and certain, and that the teachers in other states will realize their need of a similar book and find much assistance by using it and adapting it to their local needs.

W. A. SETCHELL.

Van Tieghem's *Eléments de Botanique*.¹—While the first volume of this text-book, as would be expected from the author's many important contributions to vegetable anatomy and morphology, presents a clear and sound statement of this part of botany, the second volume, in the present edition, merits special mention as being the first readily accessible synopsis of the vegetable kingdom in which the dicotyledonous flowering plants are classified according to their seed and ovule structure along the line laid down by Professor Van Tieghem in a series of articles published some two years ago.²

Excluding the Nymphæaceæ, which, with the Gramineæ, he places in a class considered as being exactly intermediate between the Monocotyledons and Dicotyledons, the author divides the latter into two subclasses, Insemineæ and Semineæ, the first destitute of detachable seeds at maturity of the fruit, and the second bearing seeds. The first of these is then divided into groups marked by the presence or absence of transient ovules (which, when present, are

¹ Van Tieghem, Ph. *Eléments de Botanique*. Troisième édition. Paris, Masson et Cie., 1898. 2 vols., 12 mo. i. Botanique générale. ii. Botanique spéciale.

² Van Tieghem. Sur les Phanérogames sans graines, formant le groupe des Inséminées, *Comptes Rend.* 124: 22 mars—3 mai, 1897.